



Iowa Smart Planning Task Force Comprehensive Planning Committee

Workgroup: Regional Comprehensive Planning

Date: August 11, 2010

Chair: Rick Hunsaker

Scope of group's work:

- 1) Develop a model for regional comprehensive planning for Iowa and recommend partnerships between state agencies, local governments, educational institutions, and research facilities.
- 2) Evaluate and develop incentives to conduct local and regional comprehensive planning, including but not limited to state financial and technical assistance.
- 3) Recommend the means by which technical and financial assistance for comprehensive planning can be provided and administered.

Participants:

Name	Organization	Email
Rick Hunsaker	Iowa Association of Regional Councils	rhunsaker@region12cog.org
Liz Van Zomeren	Rebuild Iowa Office	liz.vanzomeren@rio.iowa.gov
Nichole Warren	Iowa Association of Regional Councils	iarcdirector@live.com
Ruth Randleman	City of Carlisle	ruthrandleman@aol.com
Wayne Peterson	Dept. of Agriculture	wayne.petersen@iowaagriculture.gov
Charles Connerly	University of Iowa	Charles-connerly@uiowa.edu
Aaron Todd	Rebuild Iowa Office	Aaron.todd@rio.iowa.gov
Carey Nagle	American Institute of Architects	cnagle@bnim.com
Theresa Kehoe	Iowa Senate Democrats	Theresa.kehoe@legis.state.ia.us
Bill Freeland	Iowa House Democrats	Bill.freeland@legis.state.ia.us
Jason Chapman	Iowa House Republicans	Jason.Chapman@legis.state.ia.us

Committee Meeting Notes:

The workgroup reviewed and discussed the following possible recommendations:

1. Regional plans are encouraged and should follow Iowa's smart planning principles.

Plans should include/address 10 principles and 13 elements.

2. Regional plans should be advisory. They should not provide directives, but provide suggestions, goals, or recommendations for city and county comprehensive plans.
3. Iowa COGs should serve as the geographic entities for regional planning and should be allowed to work together to produce plans as locally determined to be desirable.

Comments: COG participation is voluntary and organic. The workgroup discussed the possibility of allowing the Central Iowa region to select its regional entity, such as the MPO, which currently serves the region with transportation planning services.

Issue: What to do about central Iowa? Chariton Valley precedent in 2007 when the Legislature created new entity using Iowa Code Chapter 28H. COG in central Iowa could include or exclude Polk County or the MPO's boundary area (the DMAMPO does transportation planning, would have to outsource or expand to do comprehensive planning).

4. COGs should convene a separate planning advisory committee responsible for review and approval of the regional plan. This committee should also review local plans from within the region and provide non-binding comments to those cities and counties.
5. Regional plans should address watershed issues. COG regions sharing watersheds should plan jointly for the care of water resources. The State should consider the creation of single-purpose "super regions" to coordinate watershed management planning.

Comments: The super regions could be tied to watersheds following the HUC 8 (hydrologic unit code). Follow up with Wayne Peterson about language.

The workgroup discussed the need for defined watersheds in Iowa. Regions should work with watershed management authorities on planning efforts.

The workgroup discussed the term “super region” and what it meant in regards to watershed planning. Staff will work on revising the wording in this recommendation.

6. Funding mechanisms must be put in place to guarantee planning at the local/regional level. COGs should receive levy authority or another reliable guaranteed revenue source to full recommendations of the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force.

Comments: The workgroup discussed funding options including levy authority for COGs and the real estate transfer tax.

Need to learn more about the State’s Nov. 2nd referendum which would propose a constitutional amendment to secure new funding for water quality. The workgroup also discussed the DNR’s watershed planning grant program. Link water quality and flood prevention. The workgroup suggested talking to staff at the DNR to learn more about both of these items. See Stuart Meck’s comments of effective planning.

7. The State should work with ISAC, League of Cities, IARC, and other appropriate entities to facilitate the formation and staffing of a COG in the seven county area in central Iowa currently not in a COG or suggest that they become members in existing COGs.

See comments under #3. The workgroup discussed the possibility of allowing the Central Iowa region to select its regional entity, such as the MPO, which currently serves the region with transportation planning services.

8. Assuming a funding mechanism is established to begin July 1, 2011, regional plans should be completed by June 30, 2014. Central Iowa counties should join or for a COG before June 30, 2012.

Comments: This timeline may be too aggressive. Wisconsin implemented a 10-year timeframe for plan development/ completion. years. The group agreed this timeframe should be extended.

9. The State should create a state planning coordinating council to review and approve regional comprehensive plans.

Comments: Advisory, check boxes on due diligence.

Staff Follow-up: Staff will revise recommendations based on workgroup discussion and changes and provide updated recommendations to the group prior to the next meeting.